



NC Department of Public Safety
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Josh Stein, Governor

Jeffrey Smythe, Secretary
William C. Ray, Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: North Carolina Emergency Response Partners

FROM: Todd Brown, Assistant Director of Operations

DATE: March 3, 2026

SUBJECT: NC HART- Helicopter Search and Rescue Technician Application

On behalf of the State of North Carolina, I would like to extend an invitation to become a member of the North Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team.

The North Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team (NC HART) program has a documented history dating back to 2004, beginning with the establishment of its program structure and followed later that year by its first operational responses. Since its inception, NC HART has served as a critical component of North Carolina's emergency response framework and the NC Search and Rescue System. The NC HART program integrates specialty-level Urban Search and Rescue, Swiftwater Rescue, Wilderness Search and Rescue, and Mountain Rescue capabilities with State aviation assets. This coordinated capability provides a unique operational resource in support of emergency response operations across the state. The program requirements, as part of the NC Search and Rescue System, are established in [14B NC Administrative Code 03 .0401-.0410](#).

The NC HART program includes a memorandum of understanding between NCEM and the sponsoring agency once a NC HART Rescue Technician Candidate has successfully completed indoctrination training and accepted into the program. The sponsoring agency will then be responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

- Maintain technician(s) that can operate successfully in a multifaceted environment and display a high level of professionalism;
- Ensure technicians attend and complete all required training in accordance with the NCEM Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team Standard Operating Guidelines;
- Accept and maintain equipment from the State of North Carolina and other sources for use in training, emergency or disaster response;
- Provide annually an authorization letter identifying that the technician(s) are in good standing with their agency in accordance with the requirements of [14B NCAC 03 .0409](#) and may continue to serve as a Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Technician; and
- Respond and mobilize technician(s) at the request of NCEM.



If an organization has personnel that they would recommend as a NC HART Rescue Technician Candidate, selection shall occur through a three-phase process. Sponsoring agencies are responsible for pre-screening all candidates prior to application submission and by submission of a complete application are endorsing their candidacy in the selection process.

Each prospective candidate must submit a complete application packet to **NCEM-NCHART@ncdps.gov** no later than **1700 hours on April 30th, 2026**. Incomplete or late submissions will not be considered.

- Completed HSRT Application
- Signed Letter of Support from sponsoring agency
- Certificate of completion or copy of their transcript showing all required training and certifications

Please submit the application with the subject as: **(Last name, First name, M.I. / Sponsoring Agency)**

Phase I shall consist of an administrative review of all submitted applications. The following requirements will be verified through submitted certificates of completion. Sponsoring agencies are responsible for ensuring that each applicant submits a complete application packet, including all required certifications, at the time of submission. Applicants who meet the established qualifications and have a “Letter of Support” from the sponsoring agency will be advanced to Phase II of the selection process.

- [14B NCAC 03 .0409](#)
 - (g) Helicopter search and rescue technicians shall:
 1. Be a member of the Urban Search and Rescue, Swiftwater Rescue, Wilderness Search and Rescue, or Mountain Rescue Programs with a letter of support from their sponsoring agency.
- Additional Requirements
 - EMT B (Currently certified)
 - Swiftwater Rescue Technician (NFPA 1670/NFPA 1006)
 - Rope Rescue Technician (NFPA 1670/NFPA 1006)
 - Hazardous Materials Awareness (NFPA 472/OSHA 1920.120 (Q)(6)(i))
 - NIMS ICS 100,200,700,800

Phase II of selection for NC HART will evaluate the candidate’s knowledge and physical fitness. This evaluation will score each candidate against their peers and will consist of the following.

- Swimming Skills
- Physical Fitness
- Rope Rescue and Rigging

Candidates that participate and advance through phase 2 will be interviewed by the NCHART Technician selection committee. Those candidates selected by the candidate review committee will formally be invited to Phase 3.

Phase III of the selection process shall begin with a 50-hour Basic NC HART Indoctrination Course. This course is designed to provide candidates with the foundational knowledge and skills required to function as an NC HART Technician.

Upon successful completion of the indoctrination course, the candidate shall be designated an NC HART Technician in a probationary, non-deployable status for a period of one (1) year.

During the probationary period, each technician shall complete all required tasks identified in the NC HART Helicopter Search and Rescue Technician Task Book, as outlined in the North Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Technician Standard Operating Guidelines.

Failure to demonstrate satisfactory performance, or failure to complete the task book within the established one-year probationary period, shall result in removal from the NC HART program.

Partnership remains fundamental to the success of the NC HART program, and we appreciate your continued support for this critical capability. The accomplishments of the program and the professional standards upheld by its members reflect a level of commitment that should not be taken lightly.

We are grateful for the dedication and support provided by our partner agencies as we continue to train, maintain, and sustain a program that serves the emergency response needs of all North Carolinians.

For any questions or additional information, please contact the Wesley Powell at NCEM-NCHART@ncdps.gov.